

CLMC Bulletin 345 – 06.02.18

Capita – making legal demands for payments

In light of the announcement of Capita's drop in share price and the potential for cutting services, GPC have reiterated their call on NHS England for a Plan B, which was one of the recommendations from [recent survey results](#) which showed that services had deteriorated in the last 12 months. GPC have also published template documents for practices and GPs to make legal demands for payments that are owing. These can be accessed [here](#).

GPC have been briefing politicians about concerns and there was an Urgent Question tabled yesterday by the chair of the BEIS committee, Rachel Reeves MP, about the 'Risk to public finance and public services as a result of the serious financial concerns at Capita and the Government's contingency plans'. In response, the Government committed to reviewing contingency plans, but would not divulge any details citing commercial confidentiality. The debate was broad in scope covering all Capita contracts, and Government was keen to reiterate that they were confident that services would continue to be delivered and also that they felt Capita was very different to Carillion.

NHS E Shared Planning Guidance

This NHS England and NHS Improvement [guidance](#) sets out the expectations for commissioners and providers in updating their operational plans for 2018/19. Section 3 in the appendix covers primary care and in particular the focus on CCGs delivering on their proportion of the GP Forward View funding, the earlier roll-out of the extended GP access coverage before next winter and an instruction to actively encourage every practice to be part of a local primary care network, with the aim of ensuring there is complete geographically contiguous population coverage of primary care networks as far as possible by the end of 2018/19. This is an important step and has the feel of recreating PCG areas again. As with previous initiatives, it is going to be important to ensure there is recurrent funding to support this locality working and it is something GPC are regular raising with NHS England.

Transgender Services/Online Requests Email

CLMC received an NHS E circular with regard to '*Primary care responsibilities in regard to requests by private on-line medical service providers to prescribe hormone treatments for transgender people*'. We were concerned about the content and advised NHS E and CCGs accordingly as well as escalating this to GPC. GPC wrote to NHS E to express concerns and NHS England has now responded and advised that:

'The circular has been shared in response to an increasing number of requests made to us by GPs and practice managers for advice on how to respond to any on-line provider that holds itself out as being expert in the assessment, diagnosis and care of gender dysphoria. As NHS England is not in a position to make judgements on the competence and experience of providers whom we do not directly commission, our intention is to provide GPs with an authority to refuse a request for prescribing and monitoring responsibilities where this is appropriate due to uncertainty about the online provider's expertise in this field. GPs cannot implement a blanket approach to accepting or declining responsibility for ongoing prescriptions, we must advise GPs to consider each case on its own merit.

Although this goes some way to alleviate our concerns, GPs should be aware that, if they are already providing treatment for patients on the advice of third parties whose expertise they now doubt, they should not withdraw treatment before alternative routes to care for the individuals concerned can be secured.

We had asked NHS E/CCGs locally not to further circulate the information but if you have received any recent guidance or have any questions please do contact the CLMC office. You can read GPC guidance on gender incongruence in primary care [here](#).

GPC GP Weekly Bulletin

To read the latest newsletter, please click [here](#).

Gluten-Free Foods – NHS E prescription consultation.

The Department of Health and Social care has published [its response](#) to their *Availability of gluten-free foods on NHS prescription* consultation. It has been decided to retain a limited range of bread and mix products on prescription, which means that gluten free foods from the following categories will no longer be available for prescribing; biscuits, cereals, cooking aids, grains/flours and pasta.

The GPC would expect those CCGs that have already attempted to stop all prescribing of gluten free foods to amend their policy in line with this document, and would encourage them to introduce schemes that allow for the supply of these items without the need for GPs to write prescriptions. You can read the BMA's response, led by the GPC's prescribing policy group, [here](#).